6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

written or by customary rules of conduct and often exposed to the arbitrariness and mistreatment of their lords, the serfs on many manorial estates came to be completely dependent upon the will and capriciousness of their masters.

It is obvious that many landed gentry who were given such absolute rights over their serfs would tend to completely subjugate the mir also. In such circumstances the mir was likely to lose its character of a self-ruled and self-contained community and instead tended to become an instrument of landlord's power which made the landowner the absolute monarch of his estate. Under the overlordship of the estate owner the mir kept its watchful eye over every peasant, and made it easier for the landowner to manage his property, and for the government to rule the country. It was under such external pressures that the steppe traditions of an absolute, stern and distant patriarchal power were being strengthened among the peasantry.

II

The conditions of the peasants did not improve in these respects after the abolishment of serfdom in the second part of the nineteenth century.[5] The peasants were emancipated from the rule of the pomeshchiks and subjected again directly to the government. But now the government, pushed by pressing demands for increasing revenues, made the mir an instrument of state control and found in it one of the most exacting of tax collectors. In order to be assured of payment the state had to concede to the mir all of the most severe measures of authority. Now the mir was entitled to banish unsolvent peasants to Siberia. And when corporal punishment was abolished in urban criminal law practice, it was still left in use in the mir.[6]

After the abolishment of serfdom the mir came under the supervision of the district chief of police (*Ispravnik*). The law of 1874 gave the police the right to arrest and to fine the village elders, and even to demand from the governor of the province their discharge. The position of the elder became so undesirable that the mir sometimes had to exert force to obtain candidates for this office or to prevent those in office from resigning.[7]

There was another official in this system of rural administra-